

Dear Friend,

America continues to be a beacon of freedom and democracy in the world, but we must never lose sight of why. The liberty we enjoy every single day is directly due to the selfless service of the countless men and women who have given their time, and too often their lives, to protect and defend our great nation.

Memorial Day allows us time to reflect on and remember all our Soldiers, Marines, Airmen, Sailors and Guardsmen, past and present, who have served for over two centuries to uphold the ideals our country was founded on. This Memorial Day has added significance as we recognize the tremendous work of those in our military and intelligence community that brought justice to Osama Bin Laden.

We know freedom and democracy do not come without sacrifice, and we look to our brave men and women at Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake, Edwards Air Force Base and Camp Roberts who volunteer to protect the American way of life. I want to thank all those in our communities who have served and are currently serving, and I pray for the safety and well-being of those who are away from their families and in harm's way on this holiday.

Recently, I met the families of Army Corporal Brett Land, Lance Corporal Joseph Lopez and Sergeant Brian Pedro at the Red Cross Real Heroes Luncheon. These three brave men made the ultimate sacrifice for us, and words cannot express our gratitude. They will never be forgotten. At the same time, I had the tremendous honor to meet and recognize Sergeant Jamin Moore. Sergeant Moore answered the call to serve his country and was deployed to Iraq, where his Humvee was hit by a roadside bomb. He was the lone survivor and suffered burns over 60 percent of his body. Today, Jamin has achieved a full recovery and is an honors student at CSUB. He is an inspiration to us all.

And this Memorial Day, I will visit the gravesite of Johnny Brown. Johnny Brown served in both World War II and the Korean War, but was laid to rest at Union Cemetery in Bakersfield without a headstone recognizing his service. Johnny Brown was a part of the greatest generation. He answered when our country needed him, and I am glad to say that 26 years after his passing, my office was able to help get him the headstone he earned and so clearly deserved.

Just the other day I was driving past Bakersfield National Cemetery off Highway 58, where I saw our American flag at half staff. Each time there is a burial for another one of our nation's heroes, that flag is lowered. We owe our freedom to the men and women in our communities and around the nation who have put their love for our country above themselves, and we will never forget their selfless service and sacrifice. On this Memorial Day, I encourage everyone to reflect on the sacrifices that have allowed us to live our lives as we do, and to thank a veteran for it.

Sincerely,

Congressman Kevin McCarthy